

March 5, 2004

To: Supervisor Don Knabe, Chairman
Supervisor Gloria Molina, Chair Pro Tem
Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: David Sanders, Ph.D.
Director

JANUARY 27, 2004 BOARD SUPPLEMENTAL AGENDA RE: THE COMPTON PROJECT AND THE EDUCATION UNIT

On January 27, 2004, after approving the development of a new Education Unit within the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), your Board requested a 30-day written report regarding the working relationship between the Education Unit and the Compton Project.

The Compton Project and the Education Unit are two independent efforts within DCFS, which will engage local school districts in an effort to improve the educational outcomes of children served by DCFS. While the Education Unit services the entire county, the Compton Project addresses the educational needs of the children residing in Service Planning Area (SPA) 6. DCFS is currently servicing 10,000 children in SPA 6. The Education Unit will support the Compton Project in the same manner as it supports all other SPA offices.

The Education Unit works with education advocates to develop training and education policy for CSWs. Training will emphasize the importance of advocating for the child's educational rights and needs. It will include information on navigating the school system, how to obtain educational assessments, and on recently passed legislation, such as AB490 and how it will effect foster children.

Parental consent forms are being developed to allow for easier access to the child's school records by the CSWs. The Education Unit is working closely with Dependency Court to develop a comprehensive agreement on specific educational information to include in each court report. This can be comprised of a record of school attendance, the most recent report card, standardized test scores, and the child's Individual Education Plan (IEP), if applicable.

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The Education Unit works closely with the newly formed Education Coordinating Council, the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) and school districts countywide. It is currently exploring the possibilities of utilizing SB933 funds managed by LACOE and earmarked for the education needs of youth in group homes, as matching funds to access Federal Title IV-E dollars. If this approach is successful, then LACOE will be able to provide expanded educational services to children in group homes at no additional county cost.

The Compton Project has begun to work collaboratively with representatives from the Paramount, Lynwood, Compton and Los Angeles Unified School District's (LAUSD) local districts, G, H and I. A community meeting was held on February 25, 2004 to network, build partnerships and create a safety net for the children and families in SPA 6.

In addition, the Compton Project is working to co-locate Children's Social Workers (CSWs) in schools to reduce the number of children entering the child protection system. The CSWs will consult with school personnel and parents, provide training and work with the community to divert low risk families in need of support to community-based agencies. The agreement with the schools is pending Chief Administrative Office (CAO) approval.

In essence, the Education Unit addresses the overarching education issues and needs for children services by DCFS, while the Compton Project takes a more hands on, individualized approach toward children in the area they serve.

If you have any questions, please call me or your staff may contact Helen Berberian, Manager, Board Relations Section at (213) 351-5530.

DS:PVF:EM
PM:pm

c: Chief Administrative Office
Board Executive Office
County Counsel